



THE DARK ORIGINS OF VALENTINE'S DAY



Valentine's Day is 1) _____ [USUAL] linked to romance and 2) _____ [AFFECT], but its history is far more complicated than people expect. What seems like a sweet 3) _____ [CELEBRATE] actually comes from violent and sometimes 4) _____ [RECOGNISE] traditions. Although historians have never reached full 5) _____ [CERTAIN] about its 6) _____ [BEGIN], most agree the story starts in ancient Rome.

THE ROMANS' CELEBRATIONS WERE VIOLENT

Every February, Romans took part in a 7) _____ [RELIGION] festival called Lupercalia. It involved animal sacrifice and the public physical 8) _____ [PUNISH] of women. Participants behaved 9) _____ [WILD] and often 10) _____ [CONTROL], trusting the chaos had 11) _____ [SYMBOL] 12) _____ [IMPORTANT]. Women even lined up 13) _____ [WILL] to be struck, believing the ritual would increase their 14) _____ [FERTILE]. Romans were also 15) _____ [PART] responsible for the name "Valentine." Two men with that name were executed, and the later 16) _____ [MEMORY] of their 17) _____ [MARTYR] turned them into religious symbols of love.

AS THE HOLIDAY SPREAD, IT EVOLVED

When 18) _____ [CHRIST] expanded, 19) _____ [LEAD] tried to make the pagan festival more 20) _____ [ACCEPT]. They removed the violent elements and added a more 21) _____ [THEATRE] meaning to the day. Writers like Chaucer and Shakespeare helped with the 22) _____ [ROMANCE] of Valentine's Day, making love the central theme. As a result, the holiday grew in 23) _____ [POPULAR], and exchanging cards 24) _____ [SLOW] became a social 25) _____ [EXPECT] rather than a rare gesture.

HOW WE CELEBRATE NOW

Today, Valentine's Day is heavily 26) _____ [COMMERCIAL], and many people find it 27) _____ [EMOTION] 28) _____ [SATISFY]. Buying gifts is often seen as an 29) _____ [AVOID] duty instead of a real 30) _____ [EXPRESS] of love. Some couples celebrate 31) _____ [TRADITION], while others react 32) _____ [NEGATIVE] to the 33) _____ [PRESS]. Some single people feel 34) _____ [COMFORT] or sad, while others find ways to make peace with 35) _____ [SINGLE]. In the end, the holiday survives through constant 36) _____ [TRANSFORM], showing how culture keeps 37) _____ [SHAPE] even the most romantic ideas.